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ABSTRACT

This document is designed to promote constructive dialogue about racial problems and solutions. Because racial conflict remains the single greatest obstacle for urban economic growth and political harmony, it is necessary to find common ground for solutions to racial inequality and conflict by opening lines of communication between blacks and whites. The discussion process is composed of 3 stages: (1) sharing personal racial experiences and beliefs; (2) defining the terms of discussion and the nature of the problems; and (3) examining 3 alternative remedies for racial inequality. Divided into 13 sections, the guide first explores what a study circle is. The second section contains instructions for organizing race relations discussions. The 3rd section discusses the role of the participant. The next 2 sections discuss leading a study circle in general and a race relations discussion in particular. The 6th section lists 5 goals for a race relations discussion. The 7th section summarizes three remedy choices to be discussed: (1) a civil rights strategy of prohibiting discrimination and enforcing the laws; (2) an affirmative action strategy of taking race into consideration; and (3) a ladder out of poverty strategy of helping the poor in order to close the racial gap. The 8th section is devoted to defining racism. Terms defined are prejudice, discrimination, scapegoating, and racial myths. Four forms of racism discussed are biological or old fashioned racism, symbolic or modern racism, cultural racism, and institutional racism. The 9th, 10th, and 11th sections are discussion guides. The last 2 sections contain an evaluation and bibliography. Contains 22 references. (DK)

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COMMON GROUND
RACE RELATIONS STUDY GUIDE

A Study Guide for Small Group Discussions on Race Relations

Southern Institute for Education and Research
at Tulane University

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Common Ground is part of a series of discussion manuals on subjects relating to racial, religious, and ethnic group relations.

The Southern Institute for Education and Research is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting ethnic and religious understanding through public education and policy research. Southern Institute is based at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Southern Institute's programs include: teacher-training seminars on the Holocaust and race relations; providing instructional materials to educators on intercultural themes; public education projects that promote intercultural understanding; and research projects designed to increase public knowledge of ethnic and religious issues.

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Common Ground

A Study Guide for Small Group Discussions on Race Relations

America has reached a crisis in race relations. As urban areas change in ethnic composition, racial conflicts have increased over social and government policies. Americans yearn for orderly change and progress. Yet racial conflict remains the single greatest obstacle for urban economic growth and political harmony. We urgently need to find common ground for solutions to racial inequality and conflict. And we need to open lines of communication between blacks and whites.

With the *Common Ground* manual, the Southern Institute for Education and Research at Tulane University launches a long-term education project designed to promote constructive dialogue on racial problems and solutions. *Common Ground* initiates this process through organized discussions that examine a wide range of perspectives. Our purpose is to illuminate options, not advocate any specific remedy.

This manual draws on materials developed by the National Issues Forums and the Study Circles Resource Center. The discussion process is composed of three stages: 1) sharing our own racial experiences and beliefs; 2) defining the terms of discussion and the nature of the problem; and 3) examining three alternative remedies for racial inequality.

The process is simple:

1. Form a study circle of five to 20 people. You can recruit from existing organizations or neighbors and acquaintances. Racially integrated groups are suggested but not essential. You can assemble a diverse group by approaching organizations or churches in your own area. In addition, the Southern Institute can assist you in locating racially diverse participants in your community.

2. Distribute the discussion packets to members. The packet is composed of two booklets: the *Common Ground* manual, and the *Remedies For Racial Inequality* readings booklet. The two contain discussion readings, participant and discussion leader instructions, study questions, and other recommended readings. The packet is available from the Southern Institute for $5.00.

3. Meet for three or more sessions to discuss the readings. Move the group toward making choices and defining their agreement as well as differences.

Common Ground race relations study circles are for people who want to participate in

diagnosing their community's racial problems and discovering solutions. The circles can become ongoing forums for exchanging ideas, resolving conflict, and promoting change.

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What is a Study Circle?

Basic Format

A dozen people are comfortably seated around a living room or meeting room, one speaking, several others looking like they would like to make a point, one skimming an article as if searching for a particular item, another scanning the group, and the others listening attentively. This is a study circle in action.

In a study circle, 5-20 people meet several times to discuss the various choices our society or their organization might make concerning a social or political issue. Complex issues are broken down into manageable subdivisions, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth.

Each discussion lasts approximately two hours and is directed by a well-prepared study circle leader whose role is to aid in lively but focused discussion. Participants receive in advance about an hour's worth of reading material covering the topic for the session.

Two individuals, the organizer and the leader, are central to the creation and success of a study circle. The study circle organizer orders study circle course material, recruits participants, arranges the logistics of the meetings, and chooses the discussion leader. The study circle leader stimulates and moderates the discussion and guides the group toward the goals that it has agreed upon.

Philosophy and Background

The study circle is a well-tested, practical, and effective method for adult learning and social change. Study circles are voluntary, informal, democratic, and highly participatory. They assist participants in confronting challenging issues and making difficult choices. Study circles engage citizens in public and organizational concerns, bringing the wisdom of ordinary people to bear on difficult issues. Cooperation and participation are stressed so that the group can capitalize on the experience of all its members.

The study circle is small-group democracy in action; all viewpoints are taken seriously and each participant has an equal opportunity to participate. The study circle belongs to the participants: individual members ultimately set the agenda and control the content of the discussions. The process of democratic discussion among equals is as important as the content.

The goal of a study circle is not to impart enough facts to make the participants into experts, but rather to deepen their understanding and judgment by focusing on the values that underlie opinions. The reading material presents a variety of viewpoints and the

leader encourages expression of personal views and experiences. The group "works through" difficult issues and grapples with choices. Common ground is sought in the end, but consensus or compromise is not necessary.

Suitability to a Variety of Organizations

Almost any organization can use a study circle to educate and empower its membership. Churches, civic and community groups, businesses, advocacy organizations, and unions have all used this small-group discussion format. Study circles are appropriate for a large national organization that may develop an original study circle course for 100 different discussion groups and for a small local group that may use a book for a single study circle.

A study circle will provide benefits for both the participants and the sponsoring organization. The participants gain knowledge, improve their communication skills, increase their self-esteem, and have a rewarding personal experience. For the sponsoring organization, a study circle represents a valuable training opportunity that can improve participants' ability to advance the organization's interests and may increase their commitment to the organization. A study circle will also benefit an organization's leaders by providing valuable feedback and suggestions.

Variations on the Basic Format

There are many variations to the basic format for a study circle. The ideal study circle meets once a week for at least three sessions and rarely for more than five or six. While regular weekly discussions usually produce optimal results, other schedules can also work well. Some groups may want to combine a study circle with their regular monthly meetings. For those groups that cannot meet regularly, a workshop format can be used at a conference or a retreat with the entire study circle taking place in one or two days.

Videotapes or audiotapes as well as written material can be used to spark discussion. Small-group activities and exercises are included in some study circles to add variety to the sessions.

The strength of the study circle is its flexibility. Every group's situation is unique, and study circle organizers are encouraged to adapt the basic format to their communities and organizations in whatever way is appropriate.

Organizing the Race Relations Discussion

Common Ground study circles on race relations are useful for small local organizations as well as for large organizations that develop a program for many discussion

groups. Developing a racially integrated group is suggested but not mandatory. There are several ways of recruiting a racially diverse group. These include contacting professional organizations, civil rights groups, schools and colleges, alumni and service fraternity organizations, religious leaders and churches. Announcements can be run in newsletters or posted publicly, or in calendar listings in the local paper. Or you can contact the Southern Institute for assistance in locating diverse participants in your community.

If you plan to use this program with groups that already meet regularly (adult religious education classes, unions, seniors groups, book discussion groups, etc.), then organizing study circles will be straightforward. However, in many professional or issue-oriented organizations, members seldom or never meet. If you are in such an organization, you may distribute the *Common Ground* manual to your members and simply encourage them to form discussion groups. Or, you could take a more active approach by recruiting participants or discussion leaders from the group's mailing list.

The Role of the Participant

The participants are the most important ingredients in a study circle. Their interest, enthusiasm, and commitment, along with the skill of the leader, ultimately determine the success of a study circle.

The goal of a study circle is not to master a text or to learn a lot of facts, but rather to deepen understanding and judgment. This can occur in a focused discussion when people exchange views freely and consider a variety of viewpoints. The process – democratic discussion among equals is as important as the content.

The following points are intended to help you make the most of your study circle experience and to suggest ways in which you can help the group. Although this advice will be self-evident if you have experience in discussion groups, these points will be a valuable reminder to even the most experienced participant.

- **Make a good effort to attend all meetings.** The comfort level of the group depends upon familiarity with other participants, not just as acquaintances or members of the same organization, but as peers in this particular group with its own special history and fellowship. **Attend even if you have not completed the readings.** The readings are important, but each session will open with a summary of the material.

- **Communicate your needs to the leader.** The leader is responsible for guiding the discussion, summarizing key ideas, and soliciting clarification of unclear points, but he/she may need advice on when this is necessary. Chances are you are not alone when you don't understand what someone has said.

- **Help keep the discussion on track.** Make sure your remarks are relevant; if necessary, explain how your points are related to the discussion. Try to make your points while they are pertinent.

- **Address your remarks to the group rather than the leader.** Feel free to address your remarks to a particular participant, especially one who has not been heard from or who may have special insight. Don't hesitate to question other participants to learn more about their ideas.

- **Listen carefully to others.** Make sure you are giving everyone the chance to speak. Keeping a pen handy to jot down your thoughts may help you listen more attentively since you will not be concerned about losing the point you want to make.

- **Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the discussion.** If you tend to talk a lot in groups, leave room for quieter people. Be aware that some people may want to speak but are intimidated by more assertive people.

- **Don't withdraw from the discussion.** You have a responsibility beyond that of listening. Everyone in the group, including you, has unique knowledge and experience; this variety makes the discussion an interesting learning experience for all. Failing to speak means robbing the group of your wisdom.

- **Engage in friendly disagreement.** Differences can invigorate the group, especially when it is relatively homogeneous on the surface. Don't hesitate to challenge ideas you disagree with. Don't be afraid to play devil's advocate, but don't go overboard. If the discussion becomes heated, ask yourself and others whether reason or emotion is running the show.

- **Remember that humor and a pleasant manner can go far in helping you make your points.** A belligerent attitude may prevent acceptance of your assertions. Be aware of how your body language can close you off from the group.

- **Maintain an open mind.** You don't score points by rigidly sticking to your early statements. Feel free to explore ideas that you have rejected or failed to consider in the past.

- **Use your critical faculties.** Don't accept without question the statements made by authors of the readings, the leader, or other participants. Think about whether statements are provable; decide whether assertions are based on fact or opinion, feelings or reason, primary or secondary sources; and be on the lookout for deceptive argument techniques such as bandwagon or scare tactics, personal attack, faulty deductive reasoning, and vague generalizations.

- **Strive to understand the position of those who disagree with you.** Your own knowledge is not complete until you understand other participants' points of view and why they feel the way they do. It is important to respect people who disagree with you. They have reasons for their beliefs which are usually not dumb or unreasonable. You should be able to make a good case for positions you disagree with. This level of comprehension and empathy will make you a much better advocate for whatever position you come to.

Leading a Study Circle

Once a study circle is underway, the study circle leader is the most important person in terms of its success or failure. The leader guides the group toward reaching the goals that have been set by the organizer and the participants. It is the leader's responsibility to stimulate and moderate the discussion by asking questions, identifying key points, and managing the group process. While doing all this, the leader must be friendly, understanding, and supportive.

The leader does not need to be an expert or even the most knowledgeable person in the group. However, the leader should be the most well-prepared person in the room. This means thorough familiarity with the reading material, preparation of questions to aid discussion, previous reflection about the directions in which the discussion might go, knowledge of the people and personalities in the group, and a clear understanding of the goals of the study circle.

The most difficult aspects of leading a discussion group include keeping discussion focused, handling aggressive participants, and keeping one's own ego at bay in order to listen to and truly hear participants. A background of leading small-group discussion or meetings is helpful. The following suggestions and principles of group leadership will be useful even for experienced leaders.

Beginning

- **"Beginning is half," says an old Chinese proverb.** Set a friendly and relaxed atmosphere from the start. The goals of the study circle should be discussed and perhaps modified in the first session, as should the ground rules for discussion. It is important that participants "buy in" right from the beginning.

- **Start each session with a brief review of the readings.** This is best done by a participant and will refresh the memories of those who read the session's material and include those who did not. Recapitulation of the main points will also provide a framework for the discussion.

Managing the Discussion

- **Keep discussion focused on the session's topic.** Straying too far could cause each session to lose its unique value. A delicate balance is best: don't force the group to stick to the topic too rigidly, but don't allow the discussion to drift. Most people do not regard a "bull session" as a valuable use of their time.

- **Do not allow the aggressive, talkative person or faction to dominate.** Doing so is a sure recipe for failure. One of the most difficult aspects of leading is restraining domineering participants. Don't let people call out and gain control of the floor. If you

allow this to happen, the aggressive will dominate, you may lose control, and the more polite people will become angry and frustrated.

- **Draw out quiet participants.** Do not allow anyone to sit quietly in the corner or to be forgotten by the group. Create an opportunity for each participant to contribute. The more you know about each person in the group, the easier this will be.

- **Be an active listener.** You will need to truly hear and understand what people say if you are to guide the discussion effectively. Listening carefully will set a good example for participants and will alert you to potential conflicts.

- **Stay neutral and be cautious about expressing your own values.** As the leader, you have considerable power with the group. That power should be used only for the purpose of furthering the discussion and not for establishing the correctness of a particular viewpoint. If you throw your weight behind the ideas of one faction in the study circle, your effectiveness in managing the discussion will be diminished.

- **Use conflict productively and don't allow participants to personalize their disagreements.** Do not avoid conflict, but try to keep it narrowly focused on the issue at hand. Since everyone's opinion is important in a study circle, participants should feel comfortable saying what they really think – even if it's unpopular.

- **Don't be afraid of pauses and silences.** People need time to think and reflect. Sometimes silence will help someone build up the courage to make a valuable point. Leaders who tend to be impatient may find it helpful to count silently to 10 after asking a question.

- **Do not allow the group to make you the expert or "answer person."** The point of a study circle is not to come up with an answer, but for the participants to share their concerns and develop their understanding. Don't set yourself up as the final arbiter. Let the group decide what it believes and correct itself when a mistake is made.

- **Don't always be the one to respond to comments and questions.** Encourage interaction among the group. Participants should be conversing with each other, not just with the leader. Often questions or comments are directed at the leader, but they can be deflected to another member of the group.

- **Synthesize or summarize the discussion occasionally.** It is helpful to consolidate related ideas to provide a solid base for the discussion to build upon.

Using Questions Effectively

- **Ask hard questions.** Don't allow the discussion to simply confirm old assumptions. Avoid following any "line," and encourage participants to re-examine their assumptions. Call attention to points that have not been mentioned or seriously considered,

whether you agree with them or not.

- **Utilize open-ended questions.** Questions such as, "What other possibilities have we not yet considered?" do not lend themselves to short, specific answers and so are especially helpful for drawing out quiet members of the group.

Concluding

- **Don't worry about attaining consensus.** It's good for the study circle to have a sense of where participants stand, but it's not necessary to achieve consensus. In some cases a group will be split, and there's no need to hammer out agreement.

- **Close each session with a summary and perhaps an evaluation.** Remind participants of the overall goals of the program and ask them whether the discussion helped the group to move toward those goals. You will definitely want evaluations from the group at the midpoint of the program and during the final session.

Leading Discussions on Race Relations

The discussion leader should encourage participants to read "The Role of Participants" before the first session. The role of the study circle leader is to draw people in, ensure that all views are heard, and help participants learn from each other. Following are some special considerations for leaders of discussions on race relations.

Creating safety and comfort within the group is the bottom line for the success of a study circle on race relations. This should be the leader's highest priority. This means ensuring that each person is able to express himself or herself honestly, without being belittled or ridiculed. If attacks occur, the leader must intervene immediately to cut them short. Sensitivity, empathy, and familiarity with people of different backgrounds are essential qualities for the leader.

Since *Common Ground* utilizes readings that present a range of viewpoints, it is important to spend some initial time in the discussion making sure that everyone in the group understands the various viewpoints. To do this, you can ask for volunteers to present each of the views by explaining how a thoughtful, reasonable person could hold that particular view. Or, you can accomplish the same purpose by breaking the group down into smaller working groups for a short time. Ask each group to prepare to make a case for a particular view when it returns to the larger group. Beginning a session in this way encourages openness to a range of views and prevents the group from becoming too narrowly focused on one particular viewpoint.

After the review of the viewpoints, the leader can open the floor for discussion and debate, encouraging people to say what they like and what they don't like about each of

the views. The group might look at the strengths and weaknesses of each viewpoint in turn, or proceed in a less structured way. Throughout the discussion, the leader should encourage participants to explain the underlying reasons for their beliefs.

Well before the end of the session, the leader should start asking participants to point out areas of agreement that exist, especially on values. While consensus is not an essential goal in a study circle, the leader should help participants understand areas of common concern or agreement. In order to close on a positive note, it is good to ask participants to describe how their thinking changed as a result of the discussion or to reflect upon the discussion process itself.

At the end of the final session participants should be asked to write a brief evaluation of the discussion program to be sent to the Southern Institute (see "Session Three").

RACE RELATIONS DISCUSSION GOALS

By the close of the discussion sessions everyone should:

1. Be able to identify the range of realistic alternatives.

2. Make a good case for those positions one dislikes as well as the position one likes, and consider the choices one has not considered before.

3. Realize one's own knowledge is not complete until one understands why others feel the way they do about the choices.

4. Understand the underlying values of each choice.

5. Make a choice (or choices) of alternatives, and understand the common ground held with others.

CHOICES

A SUMMARY OF THE THREE REMEDY CHOICES TO BE DISCUSSED:

CHOICE #1:
"Civil Rights Strategy: Prohibiting Discrimination, Enforcing the Laws"

Those who favor Choice #1 believe that the most effective way to help blacks and other minorities achieve racial justice is by adhering to the principles of equality as laid down in civil rights legislation. The government's obligation is to make sure the rules of the game are the same for everyone. But equality of opportunity does not necessarily lead to equal results, nor should the government guarantee equal results.

CHOICE #2:
"Affirmative Action Strategy: Taking Race Into Consideration"

Choice #2 is based on the conviction that equal opportunity is not enough. The government must take measures to ensure equal results, even if affirmative action benefits minority groups at the expense of others. Racial equality can be achieved only by allowing preferences for minority groups that have suffered from discrimination.

CHOICE #3:
"Ladder Out of Poverty: Helping the Poor, Closing the Racial Gap"

Proponents of Choice #3 believe that race-specific remedies are no longer the most promising way to deal with racial inequality. Because the obstacle to equality today are chiefly economic, they believe programs that help the poor - regardless of race - to succeed economically will help minorities, a disproportionate number of whom are poor."

DEFINING RACISM

A productive discussion begins with clarifying the terms. "Racism" is an ambiguous term that defies simple definition. Rather than offer one definition, we will examine briefly four different concepts of racism employed by social scientist: biological, symbolic, cultural, and institutional. From these we will propose a broad definition of racism that combines elements of the four. Although the definitions apply to many ethnic and racial groups, for clarity we have chosen to express some definitions in black-white terms.

The study group need not agree on the definitions. Instead they are encouraged to use the terms to clarify their own thinking and comments.

I. TERMS

Prejudice:

A demeaning inflexible attitude toward an ethnic group, impervious to evidence and contrary argument. Prejudice is an *attitude*. All ethnic groups posses some prejudices. Stereotyping is a form of prejudice: through prejudgment we attribute to a group a quality or trait possessed by only part of the group.

Discrimination:

Unequal treatment of people based on their membership in a group. In contrast to prejudice, discrimination is *behavior*. To discriminate is to judge a person not on their intrinsic qualities but on a prejudgment about a group. Discrimination can be either *de jure* (legal, as in segregation laws) or *de facto* (discrimination in fact, without legal sanction).

Scapegoating:

Aggressive energies of a person or group unfairly focused on another individual or group. Scapegoating occurs when one ethnic unjustly attributes their problems to another ethnic group. Popularly know as the blame game.

Racial Myth:

Erroneous theories or stories, ostensibly based on fact, that serve to explain the conditions of a racial group. Racial myths employ grand stereotypes to diagnose inequality and rationalize unequal treatment. For example, the myth that taxes have skyrocketed because blacks are living luxuriously on welfare. Contrast the myth with the reality in Louisiana where welfare program costs amount to less than 2% of the entire state budget, and the average welfare payment to a family of three is $168 per month.

II. FOUR FORMS OF RACISM

A. Biological or "old fashioned" Racism:

The belief that black people as a group are inferior to whites because of biological traits that produce inferior intellectual, emotional, and cultural qualities. This overt racism was prevalent in the past. "Old fashioned" racists believed that racial differences were rooted in genetic differences; that "inferior genes" produce crime, poverty and racial inequality. In their view, biological inferiority justified inferior social treatment for blacks - slavery, segregation and discrimination.

B. Symbolic or Modern Racism:

Some social scientists believe that "old-fashioned racism" has given way to "symbolic racism". **Symbolic racism is anti-black prejudice expressed through code-words and symbolic issues rather than overt bigoted language.** This is "covert bigotry". This theory maintains that many whites retain deeply imbedded racist attitudes acquired in their youth. But because of social pressures, whites feel uncomfortable publicly expressing these underlying prejudices. Instead they profess to believe in equality while using code-words (welfarite = black) to vent their anti-black prejudices. The symbolic racism theory argues that public debates on crime and welfare issues can easily become polite ways to express racial resentment.

C. Cultural Racism:

The belief that white culture is superior to African-American culture. This form of prejudice denigrates black cultural achievement by omission and distortion. For example, the tendency to view Irish dialect as acceptable and charming while judging black dialect as improper and ignorant. Culture can include music, language, art, implements, handicrafts, agriculture, economics, and religious beliefs.

D. Institutional Racism:

Those established laws, customs, and practices which systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities in American society, whether or not the individual maintaining these practices have racist intentions. Institutional racism is *discrimination* without *prejudice*. Individuals can unintentionally discriminate by applying policies that perpetuate past inequalities.

For example some banks "redline" - refuse to make home loans in poor neighborhoods. Since most poor neighborhoods are black, redlining effectively denies loans to qualified blacks. While the bankers' *attitude* is unbiased, their *behavior* has the same effect as deliberate racism. For blacks, white behavior can be more damaging than white attitudes.

Racism - General Definition:

Combining the above concepts we can broadly define racism as: **racial or cultural prejudices exercised against a racial group by individuals and institutions in a position of power, intentionally or unintentionally.** Power distinguishes mere prejudice from racism. Prejudice (an attitude) combines with power (a behavior) to produce racism (a system). Prejudice becomes racism when it is practiced by the economically, socially, or politically powerful (businesses, government, political majorities).

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Session One:
Breaking the Silence

Race relations and racism:
Experiences, perceptions, beliefs and definitions.

Reading: "Defining Racism," page 12, in *Common Ground* Manual
"Unfinished Business," pages 4-13 in *Remedies for Racial Inequality*

This is the "ice breaker" session structured to introduce the participants to one another and open the discussions. The objectives of this session are two-fold. First to help group members examine their own perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in light of those of others. Second, to define terms commonly used in race relations discussion. For this discussion to work, everyone in a group must help the group leader maintain a safe, comfortable, and respectful environment for personal sharing.

An understanding of and commitment to the study circle process as an open, thoughtful, focused discussion is essential for this session. The essence of the process is thoughtful listening to others to understand their points of view and a willingness to re-examine one's own attitudes. **The group should review discussion ground rules** (see "The Role of the Participant" p.4) so that members understand that they can disagree without being hostile and that they can confront a misperception or mistaken idea without accusing someone of being ignorant or racist.

Before the discussion on definitions, have the group briefly read over the "Defining Racism" section on page 12.

The following questions provide some possible starting points for a discussion of experiences, perceptions, and beliefs.

A. Discussion Questions on
Personal Experiences and Attitudes:

1. Why do many Americans feel uncomfortable talking about racism and race relations? Are you uncomfortable talking about this subject? Why?

2. Discuss the most recent incident of racial prejudice that you witnessed. Have you heard expressions of prejudice from family members, friends, co-workers, or members of your community? What was your response?

3. In what way does your attitude toward persons of other racial or ethnic groups differ from that of your parents?

4. What are the causes of racism? Do you think it possible for anyone to grow up without racial stereotypes?

5. How do you help your children to deal with the racism they encounter?

B. Discussion Questions On Definitions:

1. Prejudice + Power = Racism. What does this mean? Can minorities be prejudiced? Racist?

2. Of the different forms of racism which is most common today? Why?

3. How can prejudices harm people? Who do they harm and how?

4. How can a discussion of welfare mask prejudices, as the symbolic racism theory suggests?

C. Discussion Questions on the <u>Remedies</u> Reading:

1. Do you agree that racial inequality is growing? What are the causes? Lack of family values? Declining economic opportunity?

2. What economic changes have occurred in your community that affect racial inequality and race relations?

Session Two:
Two Alternatives

Two theories on the causes of and solutions to racial inequality

This session examines two choices for solving racial inequality. Both choices contain implicit and explicit explanations for the causes of racial inequality. **Have the group summarize the positions first and briefly review the definitions on page 12.** We recommend one hour discussion for each reading.

Reading: "Choice #1 - Civil Rights Strategy: Prohibiting Discrimination, Enforcing the Laws," p. 14-20 in *Remedies*

"Choice #2 - Affirmative Action Strategy: Taking Race into Consideration," p. 22-30 in *Remedies*

A. Discussion questions for Choice #1.

1. Does equal treatment lead to equal results? Why or why not? Is the government obligated to achieve equal results to compensate for past discrimination?

2. Should the constitution be color blind? Does it matter if it has not been in the past?

3. The theory of Symbolic Racism (see "Defining Racism") suggests that some employers discriminate in hiring but conceal their prejudices. How does choice #1 solve the problem of employment discrimination by covert bigots? What are the consequences if it can not?

4. Institutional racism, by definition, is discrimination without personal prejudice. Can choice #1 remedy bank red-lining?

5. Viet Nam era veterans are given preferential hiring in the postal service. Is this preferential treatment? Does it violate a Constitutional principle? Does it erode the work ethic?

B. Discussion Questions for Choice #2

1. Minorities have been discriminated against as a group. Should they be compensated as a group? Why or why not? Has the government compensated other groups without proving individual discrimination?

2. What is the effect of preferential treatment on Blacks? Whites?

3. Is affirmative action prejudice? Discrimination? Racism?

4. Is this an either/or choice? Is it acceptable to have some affirmative action hiring goals for specific employers with a history of discrimination? Why?

5. Does choice #2 deny individual responsibility? Does it perpetuate dependency on the government?

Session Three:
None of the Above

Examining another choice. Making choices, finding common ground. Evaluating.

This final session explores a third explanation for inequality and proposes an alternative remedy. **Start by summarizing the three options again and reviewing definitions.** By the end of this session participants should make a clear choice of the options, and understand the common ground they share with others.

Participants may vote for more than one choice or propose entirely different options. At the end of the session the group should fill out the evaluation forms and have the group organizer return the forms to the Southern Institute.

Reading: "Choice #3 - Ladder out of Poverty: Helping the Poor, Closing the Racial Gap," p. 31-41 in *Remedies*

Discussion Questions:

1. Is the poverty of the underclass a consequence of their own negative behaviors (i.e. moral failure, lack of work ethic) or the byproduct of economic forces beyond their control (unemployment, lack of skills)? How would the proponents of each of the three choices explain the causes of racial inequality?

2. Is there a public obligation to assist poor people who are unable to gain and hold stable, decent-paying jobs? Does justice require that government provide a ladder out of poverty? These programs will be expensive. How can they be implemented if the middle class is opposed to tax increases?

3. Choice #3 claims to provide a ladder out of poverty. What ladders have whites had in the past?

4. How would choice #3 solve covert discrimination in employment and promotions? Could it remedy institutional racism - for instance the problem of bank red lining?

5. Is ignoring the plight of the poor an example of prejudice?

Conclusion Discussion Questions:

1. Identify the causes of racial inequality in your city.

2. What would you tell elected officials needed to be done to improve race relations and remedy racial inequality? What kind of public action is needed? What are you willing to compromise on?

3. What choices do you prefer? What solutions do you think the group can agree on?

Written Evaluation

Each person should write a brief evaluation in the area below. Please evaluate the following:

Reading materials
Discussion Questions
Group Process
Benefits of the discussion

Group organizers should return the evaluations to the Southern Institute for Education and Research Office.

Annotated Bibliography on Racism and Race Relations

This bibliography is selected primarily from recent works that reflect aspects of the current national dialogue. Videos and other bibliographies are listed as well.

Berry, Wendell. The Hidden Wound. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1989.

Personal recollections and considerations of the effects of racism on whites as members of the dominant race. Offers insights into the moral, social, and political dilemmas of race relations.

Brooks, Roy L. *Rethinking the American Race Problem*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Argues that no meaningful talk about or work on the problems of African-Americans can talk place without merging the question of race with that of class structure. Argues that self-help is the best hope for African-Americans. Intended audiences are civil rights legal scholars and the general public.

Democracy's Next Generation II: A Study of American Youth on Race. Washington, DC: People For the American Way, 1992. For price and ordering information, contact People For the American Way, 2000 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 467-4999. Abridged version also available.

Examines racial attitudes among today's youth, and argues this is a crucial first step for breaking the cycle of blaming between whites and minorities. Finds that young people's attitudes on race reflect the anger and tension of the past decade. Study includes three facets: a nationwide telephone survey of 15- to 24-year olds; focus groups of white youth; and in-depth, one-on-one, face-to-face interviews with white and minority "children of the civil rights era."

Edsall, Thomas Byrne, with Edsall, Mary D. "When the Official Subject is Presidential Politics, Taxes, Welfare, Crime, Rights, or Values...the Real Subject is RACE." *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1991.

Argues that considerations of race are "imbedded in the strategy and tactics of politics, in competing concepts of the function and responsibility of government, and in each voter's conceptual structure of moral and partisan identity."

EXTRA! magazine, July/August 1992. *EXTRA!* is a publication of FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting), 130 West 25th Street, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10001, telephone: (212) 633-6700, FAX: (212) 727-7668.

Issue devoted to analyzing racism in news reporting and other aspects of mass media.

Hacker, Andrew. *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal.* New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1992.

An analysis of what keeps whites and blacks far apart. Argues that most liberals no longer make race a high priority.

Argues that both left and right share the pervasive misconception that blacks are inferior. Looks at the way issues of race affect the choices ordinary Americans make in their daily lives.

Kozol, Jonathan. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Describes what is happening to children from poor families in the inner cities and the less affluent suburbs. Argues that public schools in most of the U.S. remain segregated and unequal.

Lemann, Nicholas. "The Other Underclass." *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1991.

Examines Hispanic subgroups; demonstrates that Puerto Ricans are the worst-off ethnic group in the country. Looks at different theories that offer some explanation of why there is a Puerto Rican underclass.

Leone, Bruno. *Racism: Opposing Viewpoints*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1986.

Historical readings that demonstrate a variety of viewpoints as applied to question s of racism from the beginning of the U.S. to the present. Contains a section on the nature of racism.

Melville, Keith. *Remedies for Racial Inequality: Why Progress Has Stalled, What Should Be Done*. Dayton, OH: National Issues Forums Institute, 1990. For price and ordering information, contact Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2460 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, IA 52004-0539, (800) 338-5578. Abridged version suitable for new readers also available.

Pogrebin, Letty Cottin. "From Our Heads and Our Hearts: Connecting with Black Women." *Lilith*, Winter 1991.

Describes the genesis and progress of a black-Jewish women's dialogue group.

Racism in America. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1991.

An anthology of readings examining various aspects of racism in America today. Chapters include: "Is Racism Responsible for Minority Poverty," "Do Minorities Deserve Special Treatment," and "How Can Racism Be Stopped?"

Sigelman, Lee and Welch, Susan. *Black Americans' Views of Racial Inequality: The Dream Deferred*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Most social science work on racial attitudes has focused on white attitudes; this remedies the gap by examining the attitudes, values, opinions, and behaviors of black Americans. The final chapter summarizes what we know and don't know about what and how Americans think about racial inequality, how attitudes are changing, and how perceptions shape society.

Steele, Claude M. "Race and the Schooling of Black Americans." *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1992.

A social psychologist, Steele makes an argument about the sometimes subtle messages minority students receive. Believes that stigma is connected to school achievement patterns for black Americans.

Steele, Shelby. *Content of our Character: A New Vision of Race in America*. New York: St. Martin Press, 1990.

Asserts that it is time for blacks to stop thinking of themselves as victims.

Race and Class. A Journal for Black and Third World Liberation. Published quarterly by the Institute of Race Relations, London.

Examines issues of race and class worldwide.

Rothenberg, Paula S., ed. *Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Study*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

More than 70 interdisciplinary readings covering issues of importance to blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. Topics include: legal status, consequences of inequality, stereotyping and language, how to move ahead.

Sowell, Thomas. *Markets and Minorities*. New York: Basic Books, 1981.

Analysis of the economic situation of America's racial and ethnic minorities. Offers an explanation of why government programs to improve the lot of minorities have failed, and argues that minorities can use the market to improve their economic condition.

Three Rivers, Amoja. *Cultural Etiquette: A Guide for the Well-Intentioned*. Indian Valley, VA: Market Wimmin. Available from Market Wimmin, Box 28, Indian Valley, VA 24105.

A brief, practical guide to countering the disinformation and ignorance that come with pervasive stereotypes that affect everyday language. Written "for those unlearning racism and anti-semitism."

Terkel, Studs. *Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel About the American Obsession*. New York: The New Press, 1992.

Interviews ordinary Americans; people talk candidly about how race affects their daily lives.

Williams, Juan, with the Eyes on the Prize Production Team. *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965*. A companion volume to the PBS Television Series. New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1987

A history of the civil rights movement as seen by the participants then and now. Time-line of the movement, readable stories, photos.

Williams, Patricia. *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Autobiographical essay by a lawyer and professor of commercial law. Williams is the great-great-granddaughter of a slave and a white southern lawyer. Reflections on the intersection of race, gender, and class. Offers thoughts on some of the racial incidents that have been in the headlines over the past few years.